



**THE ROME GROUP**  
insights, strategies, solutions

**INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | A QUARTERLY RESOURCE FROM THE ROME GROUP**

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## CEO Message

*This month, the CEO Message is a special feature by Elizabeth Pickard. Elizabeth is an enormously talented consultant at The Rome Group who has assisted numerous nonprofits with their strategic plans. She is also a fabulous baker, too. Read on for her insights about ways to retain staff...*

Job postings on The Rome Group's Nonprofit Career Board have increased 30 percent over the last year, which tells us a clear story. Nearly every nonprofit we have talked to has experienced the “Great Resignation” to some extent or another. We’ve been faced with small pools of candidates, long hire times, and ideal candidates turning us down at the end of the process like never before. This overburdens our remaining staff, which threatens to start the turnover churn yet again.



**Elizabeth Pickard**  
Consultant, The Rome Group

Let’s face it, while we have room to grow to improve nonprofit salaries, we cannot compete with other sectors when it comes to monetary compensation. So how can a nonprofit be an “employer of choice” – where people stay and thrive? Our strategic planning and organizational development work, often including staff and key volunteer surveys, reveal common challenges and point to some possible solutions.

**1. The magic question - “What would you like to see happen?”** We’ve all been there – the tiny pain points that make our days harder – the copier is a freakish machine or expired yogurts in the staff fridge greeting us with smells of despair. It’s easy for these (and much more severe concerns) to become litanies of complaints instead of minor addressable concerns. Addressing those concerns with the magic question, “What would you like to see happen?”, can point you toward a resolution and encourage staff and other stakeholders to bring solutions rather than complaints.

**2. Don't practice false economy.** How many hours of staff time and precious staff morale is that decrepit copier actually costing you? Plan for these expenses, get in-kind donations when you can, and recognize when an Ikea trip might actually save you \$10,000 in staff time and morale. Particularly in these days of hybrid work styles when many of us are hoping to spend more time in person, a good place to start is to ensure the workplace is reasonably comfortable and welcoming.

**3. Close the loop.** Often, nonprofit staff report that it is challenging to bring questions and concerns to their leaders. Commonly it is caused when supervisors have a challenge brought to them, they take action, and check it off their list without explicitly informing their staff, "We heard this is a challenge, these are the things we found out, this is what we are doing to resolve it". Even if the solution will take time – or even if you need to say no - closing the loop means that your staff knows you listened and tried to address the concern.

**4. Model what you expect.** Take your vacation time. Take family leave. Go to parent-teacher conferences and school plays. Stay home when you are sick. You can share emergency contact information with a team member but take that personal time. If you don't, you send a message that you expect everyone to be on duty all the time. And for \$16,000 a year (my first nonprofit salary in 1995) you shouldn't be sending a message that nonprofit work means no time off.

**5. Practice timely, sincere, and specific thanks.** This one is really magical because it can change your whole attitude as well as benefitting the staff. Lots of high-performers who love their work also report feeling unappreciated. If you have a large staff, make time for your direct reports to tell you about their team's accomplishments. Then, take the time to individually recognize their staff for their great work. Taking 20 minutes a week to write short, specific, sincere, and timely handwritten thank you notes, or emails cc'ing direct supervisors can go a long way. In a challenging climate for nonprofits, this practice reminds nonprofit leaders of the things that are great about our organizations. This helps us tell others about our exciting work and hopefully takes our own stress levels down a notch too.

At **The Rome Group**, we like to practice what we preach. Thank you all for the incredible work you do transforming lives through arts, human services, social justice, advocacy, education, animal welfare, and beyond! We get to see the great work you all do on a daily basis, and that is inspiring indeed.

## Featured News

### St. Louis Mental Health Board Funding Opportunities

St. Louis MHB is accepting applications from qualified organizations with experience providing high-quality behavioral health and substance abuse recovery services for St. Louis City adults ages 18 and older. Letters of Intent are due between November 7 – 30, 2022. Details are available starting 11/4/22 at [www.stlmhb.com](http://www.stlmhb.com).

## As Fear of Recession Grows, Economy Shows Troubling Signs for Giving

According to Danielle Vance McMullen, an expert in donor behavior and assistant professor at DePaul University, the sliding stocks may have the most impact on nonprofits' major gifts or large donations.



Learn which indicators to watch

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## Wealthy Donors Want Their Giving to Be Different Than Their Parents', New Study Says

When making big charitable-giving decisions, 76% of the study's respondents said they are likely to give to different causes and nonprofits than their parents and to give in ways that differ from how the older generation donates to charity.

Find out what this means

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## St. Louis County Children's Service Fund

The Core Funding Opportunity supports many different services, from substance use treatment to transitional housing to therapeutic counseling, and more. Core partners are organizations that use proven methods, and have strong track records of yielding positive impacts on kids' lives. Applications are due November 18.



Apply for the Core Funding Opportunity

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## What We're Reading

**Nonprofits May Need to Spend a Third of Their Budget on Overhead to Thrive — Contradicting a Donor Rule of Thumb**

*Philanthropy.com*

**5 Agenda Items for Your Year-End Strategy Session**

*NonProfit Pro*

**4 Ways to Make Your Donor Relations Recession-Proof**

*Philanthropy.com*

**Competing – Really Competing – For Federal Grants**

*The NonProfit Times*



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## The People Section

If you're finding it challenging to keep up with the ever-changing roles in nonprofits, see who's where in the STL community with our brief updated list of nonprofit new hires.

Nonprofits have always inspired transformation in the communities they serve. In a space often underfunded and understaffed, nonprofits continued to thrive despite the obstacles and uncertainty since the pandemic's start.

**Congratulations and best wishes to these nonprofit professionals in their new assignments.**

- **CaSSandra Grinston**, Manager of Case Advocacy Services at CASA of St. Louis
- **Jane Miller**, Director of Development at EYC Academy
- **Jason Purnell**, President of the James S. McDonnell Foundation

- **Libby Dischert**, V.P. of Education and Events at the American Association of Orthodontists
- **Lydia Huston**, Executive Director at Kwame Foundation
- **Sarah Mayer**, Interim Executive Director of LaunchCode
- **Shamele Hill**, Chief Program Officer of CASA of St. Louis
- **Terri Williams**, Annual Giving Manager at St. Louis County Library Foundation
- **Carson Coats**, Assistant Director of Annual Giving Programs at Washington University in St. Louis County Library Foundation

Do you have news about a job opening, new hire, promotion, or other happenings? If so, **send us your news** and we'll consider including it in our next issue of Insights.

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## Nonprofit Job Openings

See the latest opportunities to serve your community.

OPEN JOBS

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